

THE AUTHOR:

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"THE ART OF AUTHORSHIP."

Several months ago there appeared in England a book bearing the above title, which has recently been reprinted in this country, and has attracted much attention. Rev. George Bainton, of Coventry, addressed a letter two or three years ago to a number of literary people in England and America, and to a few in Europe, saying he was about to deliver a lecture on composition to his young people, and as they took much interest in the works of the author addressed, would he or she kindly jot down a few remarks about his or her methods of writing and ideas of style? An appeal so seductively put was sure to be successful, and Mr. Bainton has issued in book form the replies he received, making a very readable volume of 350 pages, in which are represented the methods and ideas of 130 English authors, forty

American, two French, two German, and one each Dutch, Belgian, Hungarian, and Canadian writers.

These replies vary in length from half a dozen lines from Sir John Lubbock to as many pages from F. Marion Crawford. Perhaps nowhere else can be found so complete a collection of views on methods of literary work by the foremost writers of to-day. A rapid analysis of these opinions may be instructive as well as interesting to those who have not read Mr. Bainton's compilation.

In the first place, it may be observed that the majority of contributors seem to know less about their literary style than the omniscient critics who analyze them so skilfully. The greater number of the writers are not conscious of having a style. On the question whether style is a gift or an art, seventy-five writers express themselves as convinced that style is a gift, impossible to teach, though it may be improved by study; while only ten think it can be acquired by constant and well-directed effort. These latter seem to believe in Anthony Trollope's saying, that the best aid to genius is a bit of cobbler's wax to fasten yourself to your stool until you have accomplished your task.

Many of the contributors began to write from mere instinct, feeling the wish to say what was in their heads. To these the whole secret of clear writing lies in clear thinking. Education cannot make a writer, the heart must be hot behind the pen, as out of the abundance of life and its manifold experiences comes the power to touch life. Style by them is regarded as innate, just as to one is given a melodious voice, and to another a handsome personal appearance.

Some writers declare they have had no models themselves, though they now express the wish they had, and recommend a course of training for others. Many authors acknowledge having received much help from the study of the Bible in acquiring simplicity, directness, and perspicuity in composition. Newman, Carlyle, and Macaulay are the writers most frequently mentioned as having influenced the style of many of the contributors. Several think they derived much benefit from a study of Blair's "Rhetoric." Edgar Fawcett says good rhetorics are admirable guides, while Joseph Hatton declares that works on style are generally pedantic, and sometimes written by persons who cannot write the pure English they discuss and illustrate.

Whether a knowledge of foreign languages, especially the classics, is necessary, there seems much diversity of opinion; while George Parsons Lathrop thinks that a study of foreign languages, dead or living, is just as likely to hurt the study of English style as to help it. George Meredith declares a knowledge of the classics absolutely indispensable. F. Marion Crawford is of the same opinion, although the late John Bright and John Burroughs, both masters of exquisite English, whose opinions are recorded in this volume, read the classics only in translations.

A study of French prose is recommended by several writers. M. Renan believes that to write well one must think well; there is no art of style distinct from the culture of the mind. On the other hand, M. Taine is of the opinion that there should be a special training to form style.

A number of writers place much emphasis upon the revision and correction of manuscript, the late Wilkie Collins declaring that his novels underwent five different revisions before appearing in book form. In contrast to this, we find a few writers advising young authors to seek perfection of mechanism so as to express all their ideas at once without hesitation and with the smallest possible need of correction. This is what we ask of a pianist, a singer, or a painter; why not of an author?

Almost every contributor to the volume testifies to a systematic, or an unsystematic but very beneficial, species of mental culture

derived from good reading. One writer says it is noteworthy that while every scholar has not had a good style, every writer with a good style has been more or less of a scholar. Henry James declares graceful writing is not easy, a simple style is really a complicated thing. A good style not merely says, but conveys what a writer means.

A reader of this book cannot fail to note how unanimously Mr. Bainton's correspondents emphasize clearness both of thought and expression, and the necessity of constant, earnest practice. Mr. Howells is striving now to get back to the utmost simplicity of expression after having worked hard to acquire a smooth, rich, classic style. Francis Galton, the apostle of heredity, himself a slow writer, says that good writers have the art of building their sentences in the simplest way, with the important parts first, and of placing what follows in the most easy-going order.

Very little is said about moods or the best time to work. Those who do express themselves on this point differ widely. Edward Everett Hale and Thomas W. Knox think that writing under pressure is a good schooling, the former declaring that the training a man gets when the compositors are waiting in a file at the door to take his copy page by page as he writes it is an excellent drill in accuracy. John Burroughs, on the contrary, never writes against the mood; he must love the subject upon which he writes, must adhere to it, and for the time being it becomes a part of him. Earnestness, he says, is the great secret of forcible expression.

In this compilation of literary reminiscences several writers betray a few peculiarities of taste and education. S. Baring Gould confesses that he has never been a novel reader. He dislikes reading a novel, turning from one with the distaste a pastry cook turns from tarts. Neither Kinglake, the historian, nor E. W. Howe, author of "The Story of a Country Town," ever studied grammar. George Moore, the author of "The Confessions of a Young Man," says that when he was twenty-five years of age he could not distinguish a verb from a noun, and until a few years ago he could not punctuate a sentence. Edmund Yates confesses he remembers very few rules of grammar. "Edna

Lyall" (Miss Bayly) declares she relies more upon her ear than upon the rules of grammar, the study of which she detested when a child.

If a word of criticism be allowed a reader of the book who has found much enjoyment in its pages, the regret may be expressed that not a few of the authors quoted in Mr. Bainton's volume are notorious for writing indifferently, while several writers of charming English are conspicuous by their absence. We search in vain for a word from such an accomplished technician as Robert Louis Stevenson, while Rider Haggard, Marie Correlli, and other writers, innocent of the slightest distinction of style, find a prominent place.

James C. Moffet.

LOUISVILLE, Ky.

THE CRITIC'S "FORTY IMMORTALS."

We analyzed, not long since, three books about American authors, with the result of discovering that the headquarters of our authorship still remains, very much as of old, in Massachusetts, New York, and Connecticut. Another way of following up the same inquiry is by analyzing the so-called "American Academy," devised by the *New York Critic*, and consisting originally of "forty immortals,"—to adopt the ambitious French phrase,—selected by a constituency of about one hundred and thirty voters from among the readers of that weekly. This balloting took place in 1884. The recent choice by the "immortals" themselves of nine new members shows on the whole more maturity of selection than was seen in the original list. The men thus chosen are the following, in the order given: R. W. Gilder, Phillips Brooks, C. E. Norton, F. J. Child, F. R. Stockton, H. C. Lea, A. D. White, H. H. Furness, and Joel Chandler Harris.

An analysis of the final list of forty, viewed in respect to habitat, shows the following results: Massachusetts—Aldrich, Brooks, Cable, Child, Fiske, Frothingham, Hale, Higginson, Holmes, Howells, Lowell, Norton, Parkman, Whittier (14). New York—Burroughs, Curtis, Dana, Gilder, Hawthorne, Stedman, Stoddard, Tyler, White (9). Connecticut—Clemens, Fisher, Lathrop, Mitchell, Porter, Warner, Whitney (7). New Jersey—Stockton, Whitman (2). Pennsylvania—Furness, Lea (2). England—Harte, James (2). District of Columbia—Bancroft (1). Michigan—Winchell (1). Georgia—Harris (1). Italy—Story (1). How far this precedence extends also to weight of metal must be left to the judgment of

each reader. New England and New York, it seems, still furnish the bulk of the recognized authors of the nation, although Dr. Eggleston, in his "History of the United States and Its People" (p. 381), mentions it as the leading characteristic of the "present school of writers" in this country that they "are not chiefly a group of men about New York or Boston." As a matter of fact, this group predominates as distinctly as ever, so far as is indicated by these forty so-called "immortals." *New York Evening Post*.

So long ago as the 12th of April, 1884, the *Critic* published the results of a *plébiscite*, as it is called, among its readers, designed to point out the forty American Immortals most worthy of holding academic chairs in a "possible American Academy." Shall we be so daring as to cut down this list to eighteen, and so make an Academy on the Swedish, instead of the French, model? Holmes, Lowell, Whittier, and Bancroft, which are the four first names, must come in; so must Aldrich for his polished verse; and Henry James, whom we have yet a certain scruple in giving back to the only country where he is not at home; and Parkman, the prince of American historians. We must have Howells in for his novels, and must hope that no one will ever be cashiered from the best of all possible societies. A pair of tale-makers, masters of the *conte*, come next. Room for Bret Harte and George W. Cable: Nelson Page should go in with them, if I had my way, for the sake of those exquisite Virginian tales of his, but his name is not among the *Critic's* forty.

Our next batch must include the *Critic* poets, Stedman and Stoddard; two delicious essayists, G. W. Curtis and John Burroughs; Mark Twain (whose honor, in spite of past favors, I grudge because of his coarse and ignorant travesty of the Table Round); and two aged scholars of renown at Yale, Whitney and Noah Porter. We are now seventeen, I find, and to make up our full tale let us surprise Walt Whitman in his retreat at Camden by election to our Academy. That would be eighteen, I fancy, at which even the *Saturday Review* could scarcely mock.—*Edmund Gosse, in the Speaker, London.*

THE WAGES OF BRAINS.

The average royalty paid to an American author for his work is ten per cent. on the gross receipts from sales. The average commission paid the bookseller for putting it before the public is fifty per cent. The remainder represents the cost of production and the profit of the publisher. In

general terms it may be said that of every dollar which the reading public pays to the bookseller for books, fifty cents goes into the pocket of the bookseller, thirty cents goes to defray the cost of publication, while the author and publisher each receive ten cents. On paper-covered books it is even worse.

Let us look for a moment at the publisher's balance sheet of an average American novel of 120,000 words, of which there has been issued, say, an edition of 8,000 copies, bound in cloth and retailed at a dollar a copy. It would look about as follows:—

EXPENDITURES.	
Type-setting and stereotyping.....	\$300
Cost of paper.....	400
Printing and binding.....	1,500
Damaged and returned copies, advertising and miscellaneous expenses.....	200
Total.....	\$2,400
RECEIPTS.	
Sales to booksellers, less 50 per cent. discount.....	\$4,000
Profit to booksellers.....	4,000
Profit to publisher.....	800
Profit to author.....	800

If this supposititious volume were to be in paper covers, the retail price would be fifty cents; in that event, the proportion of profit would be the same to booksellers, but would be reduced to the publisher and author.

The recent case of Mr. Gunter, the playwright, is illustrative of this unfair division of profits. Of course, "Mr. Barnes of New York" and the two books which followed were exceptionally successful. But it was owing to the fact that Mr. Gunter was his own publisher that he realized a fortune from them. In his case the following is the balance sheets:—

Profit of booksellers.....	\$73,500
Profit of news companies.....	14,000
Profit of Gunter, publisher.....	40,500
Profit of Gunter, author.....	19,000

Even in this case Gunter, as author and publisher, received one-fourth less from his work than did the booksellers and news companies.

English novels, as a rule, are longer than ours, — usually running from 160,000 to 200,000 words, — and they are usually issued in two or three volumes. These sell at a rate of \$2.50 per volume, and the author's royalty varies from fifty cents to \$1 upon the complete work — instead of ten or fifteen cents, as with us. At this higher cost the edition is naturally smaller, and is often sold almost entirely to the libraries, but, on the other hand, the margin of profit is larger, owing to the much smaller cost of paper and labor in production, and the booksellers' discount rarely exceeds thirty percent, when the work is sold through booksellers at all.

That the English author has a much better thing of it in every way than his American brother is such a well-known fact that there is a possibility of England becoming the field for the exploitation of American novels; already three of our foremost writers have chosen to issue in England previous to obtaining copyright here. With one or two exceptions upon the part of our publishers, the English author receives absolutely nothing from the American pirates who publish his books in this country; but his share of the profits upon the sale of his books at home is so much more equitable that he makes an income which seems very large to the literary man on this side of the Atlantic.

An English authority has recently given the approximate annual earnings of the most popular British authors now living. While merely estimates, they are probably sufficiently near the correct figures to furnish a basis for comparison with the earnings of American authors.

This authority says that the income of William Black from his writings is \$18,000 per year; that of W. E. Norris, \$15,000; that of Miss Braddon, \$15,000; Rider Haggard, \$12,000; Walter Besant, \$12,000; Thomas Hardy, \$8,000; Clark Russell, \$8,000; Mrs. Alexander, \$7,000; R. D. Blackmore, \$7,000; F. Anstey, \$6,000.

Of these writers Black is certainly the most popular, and he has the largest income. He is prolific, and makes as much as \$15,000 from a single book — for which he also sells the American serial rights. Norris, though an invalid, writes very steadily, and probably makes more money, in proportion to the work he turns out, than Black. Blackmore and Anstey are both popular, but write slowly. Hardy, it is said, works only by inspiration, as he has a remunerative government situation in the Tower of London and an independent fortune. Miss Braddon and Besant, on the contrary, are indefatigable, and publish at intervals of the utmost regularity. Haggard's income for the two years following the publication of "King Solomon's Mines" was something phenomenal; the figures given represent his probable royalties for the past year, doubtless including "Beatrice," for the American rights of which he is said to have received \$8,000.

Of those not mentioned, Ouida probably does not make over \$5,000 per year. Her popularity in this country is much greater than in England, and, of course, she receives nothing for her American rights. It is rather difficult to make an estimate of her earnings, for the reason that she writes also in French and is the author of many fugitive articles. James Payn and F. W. Robinson also make a

great deal from their books. The former edits a London periodical and writes largely for weekly journals. It is possible that his earnings are quite as much as Black's.

Of two other British authors—Stevenson and Kipling—it is difficult to judge. Stevenson is so erratic that he may make \$5,000 this year and not a penny next. It is possible that the larger part of his income comes from his American publishers. Rudyard Kipling is a new man who seems destined to mount the ladder at a fast pace. It is understood that his stories are begged for by English publishers at a rate as high as \$50 per thousand words. If this be true, his income from his writings published within the past year cannot be much less than \$20,000.

In comparison with these figures, the earnings of American authors seem ridiculous. A gentleman prominently connected with one of our largest publishing houses is responsible for the following estimate of yearly receipts:—

Marion Crawford, \$15,000; Bret Harte, \$12,000; W. D. Howells, \$10,000; F. R. Stockton, \$6,000; Edgar Saltus, \$5,000; Edgar Fawcett, \$4,000; Brander Matthews, \$3,000; Julian Hawthorne, \$3,000; Miss Woolson, \$3,000; Charles Egbert Craddock, \$3,000; Amelia E. Barr, \$3,000; Henry James, \$3,000.

The last named and the two writers heading this list enjoy the advantage of English copyright on everything they publish. Crawford is remarkably prolific, and his books sell as well in England as they do here. Harte is a laborious worker in the full sense of the word; he would turn out much more were he not so painstaking. James is wealthy, and only works when he feels inclined to do so. Howells is simply credited with the surety given him by the Harpers; what he makes aside from that is probably inconsequential. Of those of whom no mention is made, it is probable that none have a steady income from literature purely of more than \$2,000 per year. "Mark Twain" being practically his own publisher, and selling his books only by subscription, does not enter the list. He has himself stated that he has made as author and publisher as much as \$80,000 in a single year. Charles Dudley Warner, Donald G. Mitchell, George W. Cable, George Parsons Lathrop, Robert Grant, Lafcadio Hearn, and Harold Frederic are not professional authors in the meaning of the word as arbitrarily used. Hearn, for instance, is an editorial writer on the *New Orleans Times-Democrat*, and Frederic is the London correspondent of the *New York Times*. A great many others, such as Mrs. Rives-Chanler and Anna Katharine Green,

are not steady literary workers, and their incomes, of course, vary with the amount of work they do.

This comparison of the earnings of British and American authors, however inaccurate it may be, is still sufficient to indicate the way earnings are brought down by the lack of international copyright, and the excessive percentage given to book-sellers on the sale of books.

In the magazines there is not this difference. American editors probably pay more, if anything, than English editors. Magazine writing pays better than book writing. For instance, the rate of payment on a high-class magazine is rarely less than twenty dollars per thousand words, while an author who receives \$2,000 for a novel from a publisher is indeed very lucky. Edgar Fawcett was paid \$3,000 for his novel, "Olivia Delaplaine," by the *American Magazine*, and P. F. Collier, of *Once a Week*, is said to have paid Frank R. Stockton \$6,000 for a novelette. But these are rare instances of high payment from periodicals.

The earnings of imaginative writers are almost sure to be overestimated by the public; occasionally some book has a phenomenal success, like "Ben Hur," "Looking Backward," "Mr. Barnes of New York," or "Little Lord Fauntleroy," and the public seems to think there is a gold mine in literature. What is the more remarkable, moreover, is the fact that mediocre books seem to sell the best. The late E. P. Roe and the late Anthony Trollope each made more money out of literature than any living author seems likely to do. Undoubtedly money will be the prime incentive to ambitious literary work, as for everything else, until the end of time. This being the case, literary workers are seeking that field which will yield them the best return. That field, at the present time, is journalism. Of American journalists there are, perhaps, fifty who make upward of \$5,000 per year by writing. But journalism is not literature, and never will be. But unless there be a radical change in present conditions, it would seem not unlikely that we shall, in the near future, be dependent almost entirely upon England for our fiction.—*Rhodes Macknight in the New York Star.*

WOMEN IN JOURNALISM.

A celebrated woman journalist, who gives her views on women in journalism in the *Critic*, says: "In my opinion, if you will allow me to speak frankly, it is very wrong to enter journalism, if one means by that, as one usually does, merely to write for the newspapers when one has nothing in particular to say. There is another thing, which

might pass under the same name, but is a totally different matter; and that is, to first obtain definite and matured opinions in regard to a large number of subjects which have an immense effect upon the welfare of human beings, and which in a general way fall under the head of political economy, and then enforce one's opinions by vigorous argument in the press.

"There is hardly a single issue of a single newspaper in which the most erroneous opinions in regard to vital matters do not find expression. There is not a single missionary field upon which a woman can enter that is more promising or more important than that of establishing among plain people throughout the country the habit of thinking clearly and soundly on the thousand and one questions on which they are forced to give their opinion, either directly or indirectly, by their vote. A woman who holds a ready pen, and who is so fortunate as not to be obliged to rush into journalism for her support, should feel, it seems to me, a strong sense of obligation, first, to fit herself for entering journalism, and then, if she still feels the desire to do so, to enter it as a very sacred calling.

"To do that, I should advise her to devote two years to the thorough study of political economy (at, say, Bryn Mawr, or Cornell, or the Harvard Annex, or the School of Political Science at Columbia College, or the University of Pennsylvania). There is hardly a single subject upon which one can write, in these days, outside of pure literature, without doing more harm than good, unless one has laid a solid foundation for sound thinking in the fundamental principles of political economy, and any young woman would do a very wise and prudent thing, in my opinion, if she were to expend her entire patrimony, if necessary, in laying this foundation, and to trust to recovering it afterwards by her writing. There is no trouble in getting into journalism after one is prepared, but if one is not prepared, the getting in is a matter of mere luck, and there is very little satisfaction to be had out of it after one is in."

* * * * *

In a great many newspaper offices there is a prejudice against women. Why this is so I do not know. I have employed them for a number of years, and have always found them to be painstaking, accurate, and reliable. In many cases I have found that women do certain kinds of newspaper work more satisfactorily than men can, and *vice versa*. One of the best Washington correspondents I ever knew was a woman. She was keenly alive to all the exigencies of daily newspaper work, was quick of wit, a splendid news-gatherer, and during

the Garfield campaign and the subsequent complications that arose from his death was an invaluable aid to me.

I have employed women in office work in newspapers with considerable satisfaction, and in numberless cases I have found that they could do some kinds of reporting far better than men. It is a mistake to think that women are only fit to write fashion articles. The editor of one of the great Sunday newspapers of New York is a woman. And she not only manages to keep her paper in full touch with the times, but she often leads in thought and opinion.

Most editors give women a chance by being unfair to them. I think the day is coming when women will do a large proportion of newspaper reporting. In nearly all the big cities they are now doing a little of it. Even the House of Parliament has been forced to admit a woman to the reporters' gallery, very much to the disgust of the male reporters.

Women make splendid typesetters, good proof-readers, good reporters, and fair editors. They do not make as good editors as men, for the reason, perhaps, that they are not so much in contact with public men; and this simply because their sex prevents them from gathering in hotels, clubs, cafés, and places of like character, where men find it convenient to sit and discuss all sorts of topics. I see no reason why women should not, in the near future, find daily journalism a very remunerative field. They will be brought into competition with men, to be sure; but I have little doubt that they will be able successfully to hold their own. — *Foster Coates, in Ladies' Home Journal.*

JOHN MORLEY ON LITERATURE.

I often wonder whether there are fifty, or even twenty, men and women who are earning a competence by the authorship of books, putting school books out of the question. We can depend upon it, — and in saying this I am not sure that I ought not to address my remarks equally to the ladies who grace us with their presence to-night, — that the book writer, unless he chance to have a great natural gift for fiction, however frugal and homely his life, whatever his sources of accumulated knowledge, if he depends upon the authorship of books as his only resource, will be likely to have a hard time of it.

And this marks a great change in our literary history, that the opening now, for those who look to literature as a subsistence, is in journalism. It has been truly said that the great advantage of

literature is that it has the last word. So it has, in a sense; at least, the highest kind of literature has. But there is also a kind of literature which nobody can afford to despise, and which has the first word, — I mean journalistic literature. The great historian of the Council of Trent said that it was enough for him if he got a dozen readers in an age.

This is one kind of literature. The other kind, to which the modern ideal more nearly conforms, is that which has one hundred thousand readers for two minutes after breakfast. The result for journalism has been undoubtedly good; and we have now in England — in journalism of the highest kind — a vivacity, an industry, and I will even say a conscientiousness, which has never before been seen in journalism. I know very well what journalism is. I began a good many years ago by teaching Lord Palmerston, and Mr. Disraeli, and Mr. Gladstone the arts of statesmanship in the columns of important prints. As Thackeray has said of that band of which I was a very humble member: "We taught painters how to paint, poets how to write, and we taught ladies of the ballet how to pirouette."

I have now had the advantage of seeing the other side of it, and in my very small experience I have been taught myself by young gentlemen of twenty or of five-and-twenty the arts of politics and public life. On the whole, however stinging, however biting journalism may be, it is a great force for good, and we may be well satisfied if there is a certain diversion of cultivation, of intellectual interest, and of moral interest into what seems like ephemeral production; because, along with it, there is no cessation of great monumental works.

We have them in every form and in every kind; and I must say that I for one feel that the more letters are followed as a profession, the less likely is the great art of literature to suffer. But the more letters are followed as a profession, the greater and the heavier will be the demands upon this society. Many will drift into it, will struggle on, and will not find out their mistake until it is too late. All of us hold our life, and even our reason, as Sir Walter Scott well says, upon a tenure more precarious than we should be content to hold even an Irish cabin upon.

With many, or with some, the stage darkens before the curtain falls. Youth must always have its struggle and battle; and I have heard from those who have now grasped the glittering bubbles of fame and reputation that the days of their youth, when they were in solitary chambers with not too much to eat, when they had within them the fire of

the zeal for truth and the knowledge, and all the enthusiasm and illusions of youth, — that those, after all, were not the least happy portion of their lives. Youth, therefore, must fight its battles; but it is for youth that this society exists. It is for those who, as I say, have made a mistake in their vocation; and there is no vocation in which there are so many who think themselves called in proportion to the few who are chosen.

In conclusion, I will only express my full confidence in the future of letters in this country. I am fully persuaded, as I am sure all of you are, that the same moral energy, the same vivid intellectual perception, the same mastery of that great instrument, our language, which has made our literature one of the greatest triumphs of Great Britain, — that all these qualities will remain, will operate, and will add still further in the future to that great capital which the renown of our men of letters has given to us, and will still further strengthen the moral dominion of our realm, which is more important to us than extent of territorial possessions, and more lasting than any material supremacy. — *John Morley, in Address before the Royal Literary Fund.*
— *New York Press.*

GRAHAM R. TOMSON, THE POET.

It is some years since I first knew Graham Tomson's dainty lyric work. For many reasons she has attracted the attention of younger poets for her leaning toward the French school, and some of her poems are in the triolet style. She has contributed generously to *Harper's*, and other high-class American magazines also. A number of her most charming poems have appeared in a little collection of ballads and sonnets, arranged some time ago by Gleason White. This little volume also contains verses by such well-known American poets as Louise Chandler Moulton, Arlo Bates, Robert Grant, and, of course, Edmund Clarence Stedman. Then there are any number of dainty effusions by Austin Dobson, Andrew Lang, Henley, and other English poets who have sung their way into popularity the past decade, while Swinburne, Dante Rossetti, and a score of others are also represented. Andrew Lang and Austin Dobson are not only confrères, by the way, but warm personal friends and admirers of Graham Tomson.

The name of this gifted poetess is Mrs. Arthur Graham Tomson, but for reasons best known to herself, she has elected to be known in the literary world as Graham R. Tomson. Arthur Tomson, her husband, is an artist, and paints ideal pastoral scenes, green pastures, and meadow lands, over

which flocks of sheep wind their way through the gray dusk, and his brilliant wife rhymes herself into fame in the literary world while he enhances his reputation in the world of art.

I first had the pleasure of meeting Graham Tomson at an informal "at home" given by a well-known Bostonian, a poet and charming writer herself, at her apartments in London the past season. Here I met many other notable *littérateurs* as well, including that delightful story writer, Mrs. Alexander, whom her intimates know best as Mrs. Hector. Mrs. Tomson, however, at once attracted me by an indescribable charm of manner, in which gentleness and sweetness were strongly blended. A tall, slight, brown-haired woman, with large gray eyes, that at times seemed to be a deep hazel, and a striking individuality pervading her carriage, manner, and dress, the artistic largely dominating the latter, is a summary of what my first impression was of this very attractive woman.

Greatly to my delight, I discovered her as among the guests at a dinner which a well-known novelist was kind enough to give for me a fortnight or so later. That night Graham Tomson looked like an old picture that had stepped down from a frame in a portrait gallery. She had on a long, soft, silken gown of a warm yellow, that hung about her in soft folds and fell away in a long train. It was cut in a manner described by fashion writers as the empire style, I believe, and exposed the neck and arms. About the throat was a string of pearls, and wound about her dark locks, like a golden fillet, was a yellow ribbon. Long *Suède* gloves of a yellowish tan were crinkled above the elbow. The pearls on her neck matched her beautiful teeth, which are as white and regular and perfect as they can be, and when she smiles they add much to her personal attractiveness. We had a long chat after we had again assembled in the drawing-room, and she told me a good deal of herself and of her work. Near by, as we talked, lay a prettily-bound volume, in white and gold, of her sonnets. Graham Tomson tells me that both English and American publishers have generously illustrated the fact that writing poetry is not a form of literary work that is always scantily remunerated. For some years her poems and sonnets have been accepted by houses like the Harpers and Scribner, and many of the better English periodical publishers as well.

Just before I left London I went one Sunday afternoon to have tea with this charming woman. It was a perfect English summer day, with the air full of fragrance of growing green things and plants, especially in that part of London in which Graham Tomson lives. A small, old, brick house,

with cosy, low-studded rooms, set in the midst of a big, old-fashioned garden, surrounded by a dull brick wall, in St. John's Wood Road. Adjoining Mrs. Tomson's residence is the parish church, a somewhat ancient-looking stone edifice, surrounded by a large churchyard. It might have been miles away from the sound of paved streets and the din of a city, but here it was almost in the heart of London town. A delightful, fresh, country-like little spot, with a broad sweep of lawn, clumps of rose bushes in bloom, and arbor-covered walks, over which vines trailed, and a pretty conservatory leading from the reception rooms, and, altogether, a fit place for a poet to dwell in. In St. John's wood, within five minutes' drive, however, of Graham Tomson's, dwell the Alma-Tademas, Bronson Howard, Miss Genevieve Ward, and hosts of others whose names are prominent in the literary and artistic world.

Graham Tomson's home is like herself—unique, charming, and quaintly artistic. Its two little drawing-rooms are papered to resemble old wainscotting, and on their walls hang a few good etchings and "first proofs." The furniture would delight the soul of a connoisseur in *bric-à-brac* or the antique. There are thin-legged chairs and sofas, tables and cabinets, and even a piano inlaid with brass and with the head and figure with which empire furniture is so frequently embellished. Mrs. Tomson told me how they had collected, bit by bit, all their pretty belongings in old shops here and there. From the drawing-room we went into a hall, across the entry way and into a dining-room. Here were more chairs, and tables, and *bouffés*, and sideboards of old oak, and at one end of the room a long French window opened upon the garden, showing a broad stretch of smoothly-mowed green lawn. From the dining-room to the left of this window a door opened upon a short flight of steps leading down into Mr. Tomson's studio. Such a big, spacious-like room, with a splendid north light; and here again were more big carved sofas, oak chairs, and screens, while on the walls and on easels standing about were studies, etchings, paintings, and casts. — "*Max Eliot*," in *Boston Herald*.

THE IDEAL ESSAY.

The essay occupies a place in literature that we trust will never be wholly abandoned. It serves, as nothing else can, to relieve the loneliness and dissipate the ennui of cultivated and social minds in hours of solitude and leisure. It is good talk at its best — informed, not crammed with knowledge, and easily eloquent.

One enjoys a learned, genial companion most when his conversation ranges beyond the limits of his specialty, when he brings out the chips from his workshop, or graces the feast with the wild flowers and grapes which he has gathered at random in his walks abroad. The host who presides at such a delightfully informal repast as that is not the doctor, the lawyer, the professor, but the man himself, who has come at least half way to meet us on common ground. The topic, then, is one of general interest to all cultivated persons, and the rule of the essay is not too strict.

When the days are gray and one is blue, when the nights are long and dreary, it works like magic to get in touch with a magnetic, sympathetic, active, and well-stored mind. Your own mind is led along a train of gay or brilliant associations far away from its trouble, all its numbness and dullness are gone, and you feel as though quickened all through with an access of vital power. It is not that you have solved an old baffling problem of life, or that you have learned anything of great value; it is only that you have been refreshed and invigorated, that you have enjoyed the most intellectual form of amusement, and the darkness of your mood has been dispelled as the shadows are chased away by the sunlight.

The essay proper is just the kind of talk we have described reduced to writing. Montaigne was the first master of the art. Widely read, garrulous, familiar, he did not so much attempt to explain things as to write about them, or rather round about them. His mind worked with a long tether, and could hardly ever be said to be tied to its subject at all. He carried the mental habit of a man of the world into his study, and stood in very little awe of scholastic authority. Never very sanguine or enthusiastic, and yet never in despair, taking his days as they came, he kept a sort of open house in the realm of letters, entertaining all comers with a pot luck that was usually very good. His influence in literature has been immense. He created a new form, and bequeathed to his countrymen a model which saved French prose from judicial murder on the Procrustean bed of academic classicism in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The fascination of his abandon, the ease and masculine vigor of his style, asserted at last the superiority of natural eloquence of a pedantic rhetoric. When we say that he created a new form, we refer, of course, to that of the essay. For though freedom is of the very essence of its nature, the essay has nevertheless its distinctive form. It is always a talk about something, and through all its vagaries it preserves a certain unity.

"You drop in" on the essayist, and you find him in his slippers, seated by his fireside. Some topic is casually introduced, and he begins to talk. He gives you, so to speak, all the gossip in regard to the matter. You are at liberty to agree or to differ; in any case, you have passed an hour with a very sensible and agreeable man.

Charles Lamb is an English Montaigne, not quite so learned, maybe, and a little more prim and dainty in style. There are besides other obvious differences; but they are both typical essayists, writers of entertaining talk. Holmes and Emerson, it will be universally admitted, have written the best American essays. It is true that Holmes affects another form, preferring to connect his sparkling monologues with a slender thread of narrative; but in reality he is an essayist. Emerson pretends to nothing else in prose; but his pitch is very high, and nothing is more wonderful than the simplicity of his style in dealing with the most difficult and mysterious questions of life. But his simplicity is only verbal. It requires a special culture to enjoy him thoroughly. He, too, talks about his subjects. His most intimate friends could not be sure that they knew precisely what he believed in regard to those questions which must have been, above all others, interesting to him. We discover in his essays wit, humor, fancy, shrewd common sense, and a profound intuitive faculty. He makes a great many quotations, he relates numerous anecdotes, and he will even condescend to play upon a word, as when he says that the highest ambition of an ancient Egyptian seemed to be well buried, and that a rich man of that country might have been properly styled a pyramidaire rather than a millionaire. He is always charming to those who know how to read him, but you must not look for logical coherence. His sentences, to use once more his often quoted confession, are "infinitely repellant particles." He understood his own limitations, and was wise enough to observe them. We can well imagine how tame and lame a formal argument would have been from him, and heartily rejoice that he never returned to cut a thesis up into firstly and secondly. He gave us of his best, and, though he left us little instruction, his work will always remain a source of inspiration.

We have been discussing the ideal essay — something that is not a homily, or a lecture, or anything of the nature of a treatise. Our plea is that a place should still be kept for good, informal talk in literature. We are pleased to think that there will always be a demand for competitions of that sort in the best society of the republic of letters. — *New Orleans Picayune.*

THE AUTHOR.

WM. H. HILLS, . . . EDITOR AND PUBLISHER.

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"THE WRITER" FOR SEPTEMBER.

THE WRITER for September contains: "On Beginning," by A. E. Doty; "Uncut 'Gems of Thought,'" by Charles Prescott Shermon; "The Modern Muse," by Mary A. Worswick; "Letter-writing as an Aid to Style," by Horace London; "Rejected Stories and What to Do with Them," by Marshall Saunders; "The Wrongs of Writers," by Eva L. Carson; "The Diary as a Factor in Literary Culture," by William S. Morris; "Booksellers' Ignorance," by John L. Cowan; "Kansas City Scribblers' Club," by Cornelia Hickman; together with the usual departments entitled "Queries," "The Scrap Basket," "The Use and Misuse of Words," "Book Reviews," "Helpful Hints and Suggestions," "Literary Articles in Periodicals," and "News and Notes."

HENRY JAMES ON LITERARY ART.

In his most recent novel, "The Tragic Muse," Mr. Henry James thus discourses upon the work of a writer, in the words of one of his characters, "Gabriel Nash":—

"Life consists of the personal experiments of each of us, and the point of an experiment is that it shall succeed. What we contribute is our treatment of the material, our rendering of the text, our style. A sense of the qualities of a style is so rare that many persons should doubtless be forgiven for not being able to read, or, at all events, to enjoy, us. But is that a reason for giving it up, for not being, in this other sphere, if one possibly can, a Macaulay, a Ruskin, a Renan? Ah, we must write our best: it's the great thing we can do in the world, on the right side. One has one's form, *que diable*, and a mighty good thing that one has. I'm not afraid of putting life into mine, without unduly squeezing it. I'm not afraid of putting on honor, and courage, and charity, without spoiling them; on the contrary, I'll only do them good. People

may not read you at sight, may not like you, but there's a chance they'll come round; the only way to court the chance is to keep it up—always to keep it up. That's what I do, my dear fellow, if you don't think I've perseverance. If some one likes it here and there, if you give a little impression of solidity, that's your reward; besides, of course, the pleasure for yourself."

QUERIES.

[Readers of THE AUTHOR are invited to answer questions asked in this department. Replies should be brief and to the point, and they should always mention the number of the question answered.]

No. 63.—Will some reader of THE AUTHOR tell me something about Ethel Lynn Linton, or inform me where a sketch of her has been published?

S. E. T.

OAKLAND, CAL.

PERSONAL GOSSIP ABOUT WRITERS.

Cheney.—John Vance Cheney, the poet of the Pacific coast, is spending a few days in Boston, having just come down from the Library Conference at Fabyan's. A librarian, as well as a poet, Mr. Cheney has unusual opportunities for literary work. Two volumes, which Lee & Shepard will shortly publish, are entitled "The Golden Success," a volume of essays, treating of poetry and the *ars poetica*, and "Bird Music," a charming descriptive book, somewhat in the style of Bradford Torrey's bird essays, which Mr. Cheney has edited for his father, Simeon Pease Cheney. A third volume of poems, many lyrics hitherto unpublished, will probably see the light ere long.—E. A. T.

Gautier.—"Curmer had conceived the idea of the publication to be called 'Les Français Peints par Eux-mêmes,' and came to Balzac to secure his support and contributions. Balzac accepted, on condition that the work should include a study of Balzac and his work, to be written by Théophile Gautier. Curmer accepted the condition. Balzac rushed to the Rue de Navarin, where Gautier was then living, and offered him the commission, which was accepted with joy. 'The price,' said Balzac, 'will be 500 francs.' Théophile had soon written the article, and taken it himself to the publisher, but was too modest to ask for the payment. A week passed, a fortnight passed, and he heard nothing more of the article or of Balzac. One fine

day Balzac came to see him and said: 'I do not know how to thank you. Your article is a masterpiece. As I thought ready money might not come amiss to you, I have brought the amount agreed on with me.' So saying he put down 250 francs.

"'But,' said Gautier, timidly, 'I thought you said it was to be 500 francs. Of course, it was my mistake.'

"'Not at all,' Balzac replied; 'you are perfectly right. It was to be 500 francs. But just think a moment. If I had never lived, you could never have said all the fine things you have said of me. That is obvious. Without my existence there would have been no article—without the article there would have been no money. Very well, I take half the money as the subject of the article. I give you half as its author. Is not this justice?'

"'The justice of Solomon,' answered Gautier—and, what is more, he always thought so."—*Walter Pollock, in Longman's for August.*

Hardy.—A fine portrait of Arthur Sherburne Hardy adorns the September *Book Buyer*. Professor Hardy was born in Andover, Mass., August 13, 1847. Part of his early education was obtained at Neuchâtel, Switzerland, where he learned to speak French fluently. After a course in Phillips Andover, he spent a year at Amherst, thence to West Point, where he graduated in 1869. After resigning from the Third Artillery, teaching in Iowa College and studying in Paris, where he pursued his specialty of mathematics, in 1878 he became professor of mathematics at Dartmouth College, the position he now holds. In society Professor Hardy is always an agreeable companion, and among intimate friends a most delightful one. His conversation is easy, suggestive, and enlivened by a quick perception of humor. He is fond of social life, an agreeable host, and especially delights in gathering congenial natures about his table or in taking them into his study, and with the help of a fragrant cigar bringing out a free and unconventional intercourse. Of an athletic frame, he is fond of sports. Hunting and fishing are favorite recreations. Often in the autumn he scours the woods in search of partridges, and several summers he has camped in the Adirondacks, where the guides regard him as an unerring shot. Over his study desk is the head of a deer, the trophy of an evening's hunt. Tennis is also a favorite sport, and often a long stretch of work is broken by a game of *solitaire*. In person Professor Hardy is of medium height and strong, muscular figure, with a rather small, well-poised head, surmounted by darkish

brown hair. His eyes are bluish gray, and his clear-cut face has a youthful expression, though strongly marked with lines of thought and purpose. — *Book-Buyer*.

Hedge.—The Rev. Frederic Henry Hedge, D. D., LL. D., for many years professor of the German language and literature at Harvard University, died on the 21st of August, at Cambridge, Mass., where, on December 12, 1805, he had been born. For many years his name had stood at the head of the list of officers at the university, by reason of college seniority. The *Boston Transcript* says he could repeat from memory long passages from favorite authors and recite the translations he had made from the German. The quality of his mind was always of singular completeness, and in failing health he found pleasure in intellectual memories. His self-possession, his poise, and calm were remarked, even in these later days. As long as possible he was glad to welcome his friends. About a year ago he was made happy by a visit from Dr. Furness, of Philadelphia, who is the "old man beautiful" to all who know him. A full-length portrait of Dr. Hedge hangs in one of the rooms of old University Hall at Cambridge, painted by Miss Caroline Cranch, daughter of his long-time neighbor and friend, the poet Christopher P. Cranch. It shows the fine presence of the honored minister most admirably. — *The Critic*.

Larcom.—Lucy Larcom has been spending most of the summer at the Tip-Top House on Mt. Moosilauke. She has a passion for the mountains, and the high mountain air agrees wonderfully with this lover of nature. None of Miss Larcom's pictures do justice to her sweetness of expression and her "motherliness," if such a word may be used. Her voice, like Annie Laurie's, is low and sweet; her eyes, light blue-gray in color, are kind in expression; and her abundant light-brown hair, with its delightful propensity to wave, is almost untouched by time. Her broad white forehead shows the strength and sweetness of the poetess who has risen by her own unaided genius from a mill-girl at Lowell to the proud position of one of the best beloved of New England's poets. She is one of the few poets whose songs are based on accurate observation of the nature around her; every touch is painted from life. When the dawn gives promise of a fine sunrise she rises long before light, and, wrapped in her blanket shawl, sits alone on the gray rocks on the mountain summit at four o'clock in the morning, watching the scarlet glow blush and deepen, turning into orange and gold-green behind the purple ranges of the Fran-

conia mountains. She speaks little of her own work, but does not repel the eager questioner, although she laughingly says when asked for a few autograph lines from one of her own poems, "You know I never *can* remember my own verses; they fade out as rapidly as that dawn is going; but, if you really care for it, I'll give you my autograph 'before sunrise.'" Clear, plain, with the grace of simplicity and directness, Miss Larcom's autograph resembles her own nature. — E. A. T.

Longfellow.—It was at the suggestion of Mr. Sam Ward that Longfellow was led to make the beautiful translation, "The Children of the Lord's Supper." In the course of a conversation one day the Swedish minister at Washington handed Mr. Ward a copy of Tegner's poem, which the latter soon after took to Longfellow, and asked him to render into English. Calling upon his friend a fortnight later, he was delighted to read the translation of that poem, done into English verses, full of rich tenderness and grace. Mr. Ward states that the poet's translation of the "Inferno" was the result of ten minutes' labor each day, performed at a standing desk in the poet's library while his coffee was reaching the boiling point. Mr. Longfellow's friend also relates that "The Skeleton in Armor" was not a little disliked by the poet's Boston admirers, who were disposed to criticise it severely. But, feeling on his part that the production in question was splendid in every way, he took the poem to Fitz-Greene Halleck, read it to him with all the grace and power of which he was possessed (and Mr. Ward was a superior reader), and the author of "Marco Bozzaris" was so captivated with it that he gave Mr. Ward a written commendation to that effect. Subsequently the poem was sold to Lewis Gaylord Clarke, of the *Knickerbocker Magazine*, for what was regarded at the time as a high price for a poetical performance, viz., \$50. Longfellow read his "Hanging of the Crane," in manuscript, to Mr. Ward soon after it was finished, and the latter, acting for the poet, disposed of it to Robert Bonner, of the *Ledger*, for the handsome sum of \$4,000. The poem consists of only 200 lines. — *George Newell Lovejoy, in New York Star*.

Murray.—Adirondack Murray is living quietly on the outskirts of Burlington, Vt., in a little two-story cottage, which stands on a bluff and commands a fine view of Lake Champlain. Mr. Murray is an enthusiastic yachtsman, and is engaged at present in teaching a class of young men the art of handling a sailboat, using his own craft as a school ship. An article from his hand upon Lake

Champlain is in preparation, and will appear shortly in *Outing*.

O'Reilly. — The poet, author, and editor of the *Boston Pilot* died suddenly in Hull, Mass., Sunday, August 10. He was at work in his Boston office as usual on Saturday. Born in Meath, Ireland, in June, 1844, he began life as a typesetter, but soon became identified with the revolutionary movement, and enlisted in the Fourth Hussars of the British Army, and labored with much success to spread republican principles in the ranks. He was detected, arrested, tried for high treason, and condemned to be shot, but the sentence was commuted to a term of twenty years' penal servitude, and he was sent to Western Australia. He made his escape through the connivance of a priest, and after enduring great hardships in the bush, succeeded in getting on board an American vessel. After some romantic adventures, he finally reached Liverpool, and then sailed for Philadelphia, where he landed in 1869. He began lecturing and writing, and soon published his first volume of poems, "Songs of the Southern Seas," 1873, which he dedicated to the captain of the ship which rescued him. These attracted much favorable attention, and his miscellaneous writings in the *Pilot*, on which he had found editorial employment, gained for him a wide reputation. In 1874 he succeeded in becoming, with Archbishop Williams, owner of the *Pilot*, assuming the debts of the former editor. From that time his pen was very busy. "Songs, Legends, and Ballads," and "Moondyne," his famous novel, appeared in 1879; "Statues in the Block, and other Poems," in 1881; "In Bohemia," in 1886; "The Ethics of Boxing and Manly Sports" and "Stories and Sketches," in 1888. At the time of his death he was entirely prosperous, and enjoyed a large acquaintance in literary and artistic circles in New York and Boston, being a member of many leading clubs. A widow and four daughters survive him. — *New York Post*.

Seawell. — The *Publishers' Weekly* says of Miss Mollie Elliot Seawell, the author of "Throckmorton": "She is a young lady now living in Washington City. 'She is,' says Murat Halstead, 'a niece of ex-President Tyler, and her father was a lawyer of distinction in Virginia. Her first dash in literature was in *Lippincott's Magazine*, to which she contributed a number of Russian stories. In 1886 'Maid Marion' appeared in *Lippincott's*, and was a great success, necessitating an extra edition of the magazine. She was asked by the editor to write him a complete novel, and 'Hale-Weston' was the result. She soon completed a novel, 'The

Berkeleys and Their Neighbors,' which was recognized as something remarkable for its force and naturalness, and the reviewers had many pleasant things to say. Miss Seawell's latest success is the taking of the five-hundred-dollar prize offered by the *Youth's Companion*, of Boston, with her story 'Little Jarvis,' which will be published in the autumn. The merit most characteristic and highly prized in the writings of Miss Seawell is the truth to life of her pen-paintings of Virginia and the Virginians, especially those phases that are marked under the revolutionary changes of the war that broke up the old ways, and infused so much that was peculiar in current and pathetic in ancient association. Miss Seawell is a true Southern woman, tall, graceful and gracious, animated and handsome. — *Book News*.

Stanley. — Edward Marston, who tells "How Stanley Wrote his Book," says: "Mr. Stanley's memory of names, persons, and events is quite marvellous, but in the compilation of his book he by no means trusted to his memory. His constant habit was to carry a small note-book, six by three inches, in his side pocket; in this he pencilled notes constantly, and at every resting-place. Of these note-books he has shown me six of about one hundred pages each, closely packed with pencil memoranda. These notes, at times of longer leisure, were expanded into six larger volumes of about two hundred pages each of very minute and clear writing in ink. In addition to these field note-books and diaries, there are two large quarto volumes, filled from cover to cover with calculations of astronomical observations." Mr. Marston tells this story of Stanley while at work on his great book: "Sali, the black boy who travelled with him throughout his long and perilous expedition, is a youth of some resource. Until this terrible book had got into his master's brain he had been accustomed to free access to him at all hours; but now things were different; every time he approached the den the least thing he expected was that the ink-stand would be thrown at his head. He no longer ventured therein. One day he originated a new way of saving his head; he had a telegram to deliver, so he ingeniously fixed it on the end of a long bamboo, and getting the door just ajar, he poked it into the room and bolted." — *Scribner's*.

Stepniak. — Stepniak is to lecture in Boston this winter. Kennan says: "When I called upon him in London, the first impression made upon me by the author of 'Underground Russia' was an impression of physical and mental power. He was apparently a man thirty-five or forty years of

age, with a massive, rather rugged, head, abundant dark hair, a short, full beard, and dark, deeply-set eyes. He talked little; his manner was quiet, serious, and reserved, and his strong, thoughtful, attentive face rarely changed expression, but in his attitude, in his steady self-control, and in the grave, penetrating, half-judicial gaze of his unswerving eyes there was abundant evidence of latent resolution and power. He seemed to me to be a man whom I might not like, but whom I should be forced to respect. During my stay in London I saw him frequently, and came to regard him not only with respect, but with sincere liking. Since my return from Russia in 1886 Stepniak has published a number of books, including the 'Russian Storm Clouds,' 'The Russian Peasantry,' and 'The Career of a Nihilist,' and has been a frequent contributor to the English periodical press. His later work seems to me to show a steady increase of power, and 'The Russian Peasantry' is, perhaps, the most valuable contribution that he has yet made to the world's knowledge of Russian life. He was a member of one of the earliest revolutionary circles organized in St. Petersburg; he was arrested and tried with 'the 193' in 1877-8, and he has himself experienced the prison life that he has so graphically described. Every possible effort was made by the Russian police to find and arrest him before his final escape from the empire, but without avail. If he should ever return to Russia and be captured, the least that he could expect would be twenty years of hard labor at the mines of Kara."

As an author Stepniak is accomplished and versatile. He speaks and writes fluently in half a dozen languages, including Russian, French, German, Italian, and English, and his literary style is easy, graphic, and picturesque. — *Boston Herald*.

Whitman. — Whitman, who was eighty-one years old on May 31, was found recently sitting at the window of his two-story cottage in Camden, 328 Mickle street, in a comfortable old arm-chair, presented to him by the son and daughter of Tom Donaldson, of the Smithsonian institution.

When the good gray poet was asked about his health, he cheerily replied: "I feel these sudden changes of weather, but, God be praised, I am feeling bright and cheerful, and am blessed with a good appetite and a reasonably good digestion, and what more can an old man ask who, as the Methodists say, is still on 'praying ground and pleading terms'?"

Among his literary reminiscences he said: "The last time I saw Emerson I met him in Boston at a supper at Young's restaurant. Boyle O'Reilly and

Joaquin Miller, the poet of the Sierras, were present."

Pausing, the poet's eyes glistened as he said, with deepest pathos; "Poor O'Reilly! He had a spirit touched to fine issues, and in heart, and mind, and imagination he lived to redress the wrongs of 'that most distressed country,' as Napper Tandy called old Ireland. Ah! how I miss O'Reilly. As Carlyle says in his life of John Sterling, many of my seances with O'Reilly are written in star fire. They can never see the light of publicity." — *Philadelphia Times*.

Willis. — "Fanny Fern," whose real name was Sara Payson Willis, a sister of N. P. Willis, was born July 7, 1811, in Portland, Me. Her father, Nathaniel Willis, a man of strong literary gifts, a few weeks after her birth removed to Boston, where he became the founder and editor of the *Recorder*. Later on he launched into existence that literary weekly which to-day stands unrivalled and unapproached — the *Youth's Companion*. Sara's early years were wholly devoid of any special incidents. Her education was obtained in Hartford, Conn., at the young ladies' seminary conducted by Miss Catherine E. Beecher. When Sara Willis was twenty-three years of age she became the happy wife of Mr. Charles Eldredge, the cashier of one of the leading banks in Boston. Her husband, a gentleman of culture, but greatly given to extravagance in living, when he died left his young widow and her two children in very straightened circumstances. Now, the poor widow, who had never known what it was to perform a single day's toil, set out to make a living by means of her needle, but the struggle was a hard one, and at last she turned her attention from one manual employment to another. Failing in each, one day when querying what she could do in order to obtain a living, she called to mind her old love for writing compositions when a school-girl, and determined as her last means to try her hand as author. And so, very poor indeed, and with others to toil for, and with no word of encouragement from any one, in her fortieth year she commenced to write little sketches for the Boston papers, signing her articles with the dainty name, "Fanny Fern." Her first article met with early failure, but one day she sent one of her productions to the editor of a certain paper, and he, quickly recognizing its original merit, sent her pay for it; but the latter was only very small, indeed, being only fifty cents. The success of that article led to the acceptance of other contributions from her pen, all of which were copied extensively by papers throughout the land. In one respect, at least, her success was now assured; but

the pecuniary returns were meagre enough. It is said of "Fanny Fern" that for a column of her bright sketches she received in those days only two dollars, and as it frequently required five of her contributions to make a column, she obtained pay at the rate of only some forty cents for each of her articles. But she was not disheartened in the least, and, like a woman of real pluck, as she was, she continued to write on and on. Mr. J. C. Derby, a leading publisher of New York, a member of the firm of Derby & Miller, having noticed her contributions from time to time in the Boston papers, and the popularity attending them, went over to Boston one day to confer with "Fanny Fern," and, if possible, make arrangements with her to bring her writing before the public in book form. It took him some time to learn who she said "Fanny Fern" was, and the place of her residence, but at last he found her, and called upon the lady at her humble home in a very retired part of the city. He laid his proposition before her. She was both surprised and delighted. Mr. Derby informed her that he would take her sketches and publish them in volume form, paying her \$1,000 for all interest in the same, or would give her a royalty of ten per cent. At first the author was disposed to accept the first proposition, in view of its placing in her possession what to her, at the time, seemed like a very large amount of money. But Mr. Derby, recognizing the probable chances of a very successful undertaking, and desiring to aid the poor author all that lay in his power, advised her to take the royalty; at any rate, to consult her friends on the subject. She did so, and her friends advised her to accept the publisher's judgment. The book made its appearance in due time, and, surprising, perhaps, as it may seem at first thought, "Fanny Fern's" share of the profits at the end of the first year amounted to the handsome sum of \$10,000. Messrs. Derby & Miller continued to be her publishers for years, and her books were among the most successful of their publications. Although "Fanny Fern" is scarcely read to-day, as an illustration of the popularity of their sales, her "Fern Leaves," appearing in June, 1853, had a sale of nearly one hundred thousand copies; her "Little Ferns for Fanny's Little Friends," issued in December following, nearly or quite ninety thousand copies, while later works issued both in Europe and America had an almost equally phenomenal sale. During the spring and summer of 1855, at the urgent solicitation of Robert Bonner, Fanny Fern wrote for the *New York Ledger* her famous hundred-dollar-a-column story. In January

of the following year she was engaged by Mr. Bonner as a regular contributor to his paper, her connection with it lasting to the day of her death. — *George Newell Lovejoy, in New York Star.*

LITERARY NEWS AND NOTES.

Two prizes of \$250 each are offered by the American Humane Education Society for the best essays on this question: "In the interests of humanity, should vivisection be permitted; and if so, under what restrictions and limitations?" One prize will be given to the advocate, the other to the opponent, of vivisection. Essays must be sent before January 1, 1891, to George T. Angell, 19 Milk street, Boston.

Miss Helen Reed, of Huntington avenue, who won the Sargent prize at the close of her studies at the "Harvard Annex," has become literary editor of the *Boston Daily Advertiser*. Miss Reed's first journalistic feat was telegraphing at midnight a sparkling account of the Greek play at Harvard to the *Chicago Tribune* some years since. Her Boston letters to Denver and New Brunswick papers under the signature "Leah" have attracted much attention. Her scholarship and wide reading well fit her for the responsible position.

Sir Edwin Arnold no longer intends to revisit America, as he has parted with the American rights of "The Light of the World" to Mr. Harry Deaken, of Yokohama. He will leave Japan shortly for Siam, gradually working his way back across Asia to England, which he expects to reach about May.

Here is a good story of Professor Jowett: His study windows look into the "Broad" at Oxford. Everybody knows that he is always at work. Coming with his party (chiefly American tourists) under these windows, the local guide would begin: "This, ladies and gentlemen, is Balliol College, one of the very eldest in the university, and famous for the herediton of its scholars. The 'ead of Balliol College is called the Master; the present Master of Balliol is the celebrated Professor Benjamin Jowett, Regius Professor of Greek. Those are Professor Benjamin Jowett's study windows, and there," — here the man would stoop down, take up a handful of gravel, and throw it up against the panes, bringing the poor professor, livid with fury, to the window, — "ladies and gentlemen, is Professor Benjamin Jowett himself."

The Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle will begin its fourteenth year of reading this autumn. The course will include English language, history, and literature, geology, and reading from French literature. Among the writers who will contribute the required readings are: Professor Edward Freeman, Professor George P. Fisher, Professor A. S. Hill, Harriet P. Spofford, Professor H. A. Beers, Professor Alexander Winchell, and Bishop John F. Hurst.

David Christie Murray, the well-known novelist, who disappeared from public view last November, and who was supposed to have lost his mind, or have been killed, has been heard from. He is alive and well, with that other eccentric novelist, Robert Louis Stevenson, at the latter's home in the Samoan islands.

In the Royal Library at Berlin are now 797,974 bound volumes, of which 24,024 are manuscripts. Berlin University has 137,792 bound volumes and 53,373 unbound ones.

Julia Ward Howe's writing is very difficult to read. Her literature goes to the printer in writing wholly unshaded, and with separate letters often twirled and crushed out of shape.

The *New York Observer* offers three prizes, amounting to three hundred dollars in all, for the best, second, and third original stories on the following conditions: The competition is open to the world. The stories may be entirely fiction, or made up of fact and fiction, as the authors prefer. Stories must contain not less than one thousand five hundred words, nor more than two thousand five hundred words each. They must inculcate some prominent religious principle or moral lesson. The stories must be in the hands of the *New York Observer* not later than October 31. No author must send more than one.

Novelettes of about 6,000 words in length, to be published simultaneously in newspapers in America, England, and France, have been written by Bret Harte, Walter Besant, Jules Verne, Joaquin Miller, Jeannette L. Gilder, James Payn, E. Lynn Lynton, Octave Thanet, Alexandre Dumas, William Westall, Jerome K. Jerome, John Habberton, Ingersoll Lockwood, Guy de Maupassant, W. Clark Russell, Edgar Fawcett, Georges Ohnet, and Joel Chandler Harris. The first story appeared Sunday, August 24, and they will appear weekly hereafter. The American members of the "syndicate" are the *Philadelphia Press*, *Boston Herald*, *Chicago Herald*, *New York Star*, *San Francisco Call*, and *Pittsburg Press*.

A notable literary woman is Mrs. Sophie Braeulich, who began her business life as a typewriter in the office of Mr. Rothwell, editor of the *Engineering and Mining Journal*. She became exchange editor and sub-assistant secretary and treasurer, and has lately been sole business manager of that thriving journal, and she superintended the preparation of the government statistics on gold and silver for the new census returns.

There are no fewer than eighteen thousand newspaper women in London, the Ladies' School of Journalism turning out two hundred each term, but the successes are few and the salaries lamentably small.

Messrs. Bradley, Woodruff, & Co., of 162 Washington street, Boston, offer a prize of \$500 for a story of not less than 120,000 words suitable for Sunday-school publication. The second prize is \$400. All manuscripts must be in by January 1, 1890.

Zola says he does not believe in literary wives. His wife is not literary, and he is profoundly happy with her. On the contrary, Alphonse Daudet's wife is literary, and the novelist lives as happily as possible with her. But in general, literary women should not marry literary men, says the pontiff of Medan.

Kate Gannett Wells has been spending the summer in the charming sea-girt isle of Campobello. Her new novel, "Two Modern Women," is a distinctly new departure in fiction.

Perry Mason & Co., publishers of the wonderfully successful *Youth's Companion*, have begun the erection of a spacious building on the corner of Columbus avenue and Berkeley street, Boston. The large building, which will be all used for the purposes of the paper, will have a frontage of more than 200 feet on Columbus avenue and 100 on Berkeley street.

Alexander Young, the literary correspondent of the *Critic*, and by many identified with "Taverner" of the *Boston Post*, has just returned to town after spending a month in the beautiful mountain glen of Waterville, N. H.

We read in *The Athenaeum* that, as a boy, Newman used to sleep with Scott's novels under his pillow. In later life his favorite poets were Crabbe, Southey, and Byron. His prose models were—first Johnson, and finally Gibbon. In the former respects Newman resembles Ruskin; and the old lexicographer may thus claim to have formed the style of perhaps the two greatest prose writers of the Victorian age.